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Evaluation

Evaluation of UNDP contribution to anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption

Executive summary

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I. Introduction

1. This evaluation was carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP in order to assess its national-level contributions to anti-corruption capacity development. The evaluation is part of the medium-term plan (DP/2014/5) approved by the Executive Board in January 2014. In approving the evaluation, the Board recognized the importance of support to anti-corruption, and accountability and transparency measures for equitable governance. Given the thrust towards anti-corruption and public accountability and transparency in the sustainable development goals, the evaluation will contribute to the UNDP anti-corruption programme strategy.

2. The purposes of the evaluation include: strengthening UNDP accountability to global and national development partners, including the Executive Board; contributing to the development of UNDP anti-corruption programme strategy; and facilitating organizational learning. The evaluation will be presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session in January 2017. Specifically, the objectives of the evaluation are to:

(a) Assess UNDP contributions to strengthening national capacities in anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption;

(b) Assess UNDP contributions to global and regional anti-corruption policy debates and advocacy; and

(c) Identify factors that explain UNDP contributions;

3. The evaluation assessed UNDP contributions to countries in development and transition contexts for the period 2008-2016, covering the strategic plan, 2008-2011 (extended to 2013), and the current strategic plan, 2014-2017. Contributions of UNDP global, regional, and country-level programmes pertaining to anti-corruption and drivers of corruption were assessed. The evaluation considered the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP country-level support against strategic plan expectations in term of (a) changes in macro policies and awareness; (b) changes in capacities of state and non-state actors; and (c) improved quality of governance.

II. Background

4. Progress in national anti-corruption is inextricably intertwined with other measures to strengthen governance and to improve government accountability and transparency. National authorities have made efforts to improve governance through reforms directly or indirectly related to anti-corruption. Corruption as a development issue has been the subject of deliberation at high-level global and regional inter-governmental forums; the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003 was a significant inter-governmental effort to address various dimensions of corruption. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) explicitly recognizes the extent to which corruption and bribery can affect development and stability, and the need for global efforts to combat corruption. While addressing governance, corruption and development linkages has been long recognized as critical to achieving development outcomes, challenges remain in making progress.

5. Responding to corruption challenges, the UNDP strategic plans acknowledge the need to support both targeted anti-corruption initiatives and multisectoral accountability mechanisms in public administration to address the institutional drivers of corruption. During the two strategic plan periods, country programmes supported initiatives to improve the quality, responsiveness and accountability of the public sector with respect to service delivery. UNDP directly supported a range of activities to strengthen anti-corruption policies and institutions and facilitate implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

6. During the 2008-2013 strategic planning period, UNDP assisted countries in formulating, implementing and monitoring national development and poverty reduction strategies, where anti-corruption and accountability and transparency measures were integrated. Quality of governance was considered a key area of Millennium Development Goals achievement and governance support, and corruption was identified as one of the main impediments to pro-poor development. Strengthening public administrations for accountable, efficient public services, with the overarching objective of achieving the Goals, was emphasized across UNDP country programmes.

7. In the strategic plan, 2014-2017, responding to post-2015 priority areas, UNDP further emphasized institutional and legal responses for increasing transparency, expanding access to information, maintaining adherence to the rule of law, building trust between the state and civil society, and addressing corruption. Sector-specific access to information was identified as an area for anti-corruption support. In select sectors and development areas, UNDP supported efforts to identify and address integrity risks.

III. Approach

8. The evaluation recognizes that anti-corruption and drivers of corruption initiatives involve complex interactions among policy and institutional processes and actors, and that there are inherent logical and methodological limitations to isolating the effectiveness of anti-corruption, public accountability and transparency policies. In a majority of cases these are embedded within programmes that address wider public administration and governance reform processes, and causal linkages may not be clearly discernible. The theory of change used for this evaluation takes those limitations into consideration.

9. Considering the complexity of anti-corruption outcomes and the variation in scale and scope of UNDP programmes, the evaluation distinguishes between different levels of UNDP contribution (*immediate* outcomes, *intermediary* outcomes and *long-term* outcomes), recognizing that some of the components are iterative. While not always distinct, the categorizations were useful in keeping UNDP programme expectations commensurate with the scope of its support.

10. The theory of change outlines the causal and reciprocal pathways of anti-corruption and addressing drivers ('What did UNDP do?'); the approach of contribution ('Were UNDP programmes appropriate for achieving national results?'); the process of contribution ('How did the contribution occur?'); and the UNDP contribution and its significance of contribution ('What was the contribution? Did UNDP accomplish its intended objectives?').

11. For the purposes of this evaluation, UNDP programmes pertaining to anti-corruption are classified into two broad areas: strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutions, and addressing drivers of corruption (primarily accountability- and transparency-related initiatives). The theory of change outlines the causal and reciprocal pathways of anti-corruption and contributions to the drivers of corruption programme. Sixty-five country programmes were analysed to ascertain the UNDP contribution in that regard. The evaluation covered all five regions where UNDP implements programmes (Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean).

IV. Key findings

12. This chapter presents key findings of UNDP contributions to strengthening national capacities in anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption, and to global- and regional-level debates and advocacy.

A. Scope and scale of UNDP responses

Finding 1. Support to targeted anti-corruption initiatives is an emerging area of UNDP support. Overall, addressing drivers of corruption received more attention across country programmes.

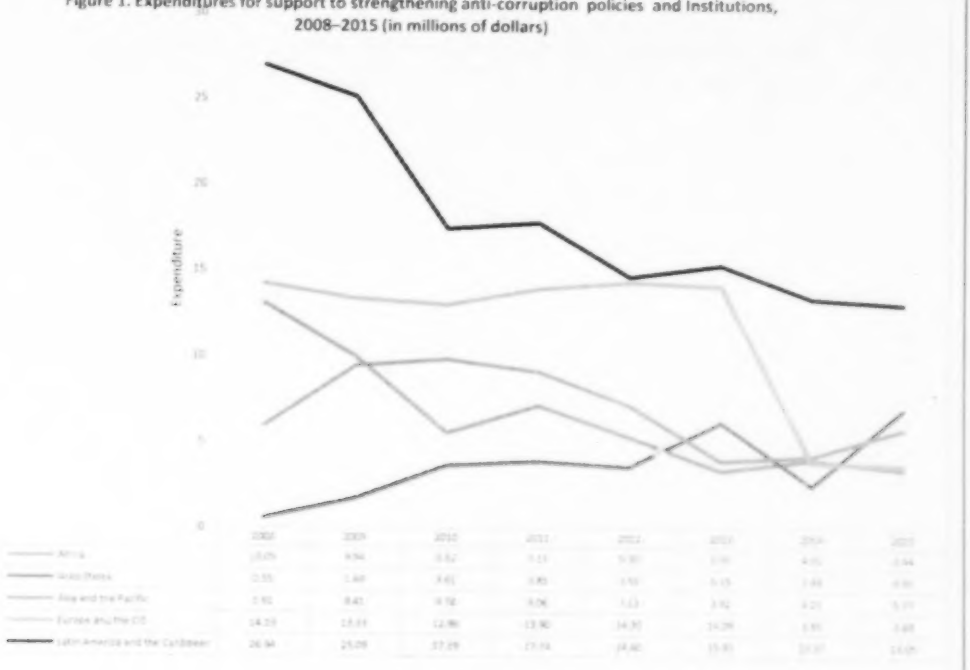
13. UNDP expenditures related to programmes that address drivers of corruption during the period 2008 to 2015 amounted to $1.46 billion, and initiatives related to strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutional expenditures were $371.9 million, distributed regionally. The Latin America and the Caribbean region had the highest expenditure for both areas of anti-corruption support, followed by Africa, the Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and the Commonwealth of European States (figures 1 and 2). Similar expenditure patterns were seen for programmes related to addressing drivers of corruption (figure 2). With respect to expenditure related to targeted anti-corruption programmes, Europe and the CIS had the second largest expenditure, followed by Asia and the Pacific, and Africa (figure 1). The Arab States had the lowest expenditure compared to other regions. One of the reasons for comparatively higher expenditures in Latin America and the Caribbean was the fiduciary role of UNDP in supporting the role of government in anti-corruption work (broadly, procurement and fund management-related activities), comprising about 40 per cent of the expenditures.

14. A large proportion (about 70 per cent) of the anti-corruption projects were mobilized by country offices, with UNDP global and regional programmes providing technical and programme management support and seed funding for initiating programmes. The share of regular resources is between 2 per cent and 18 per cent, mostly towards the lower end of that range.

15. Although governance programmes have been a major component of UNDP programme expenditures, financial resources for anti-corruption and for addressing accountability and transparency-related programmes have declined since 2011, corresponding with a similar decrease in overall governance expenditures. The decline corresponded with a similar decrease in overall UNDP programme expenditures and reductions in regular resources. The decline was about 50 per cent for anti-corruption expenditures and 35 per cent for accountability and transparency-related expenditures. The decline in resources was most significant in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. Resource mobilization challenges were evident at both institutional and country levels, significantly affecting programme choices. Resource challenges were more intense in middle- and upper-middle-income countries, which received a smaller share of regular resources or nothing at all. Because donors reduced development support to such countries or moved towards a bilateral/budget support modality, it was hard for UNDP to mobilize programme resources. Since country offices mobilize a large proportion of programme resources in the majority of cases, governance issues are pursued where funding is available. Some areas, such as anti-corruption, the right to information and other transparency issues, required base funding for country offices to develop a programme and mobilize further resources.

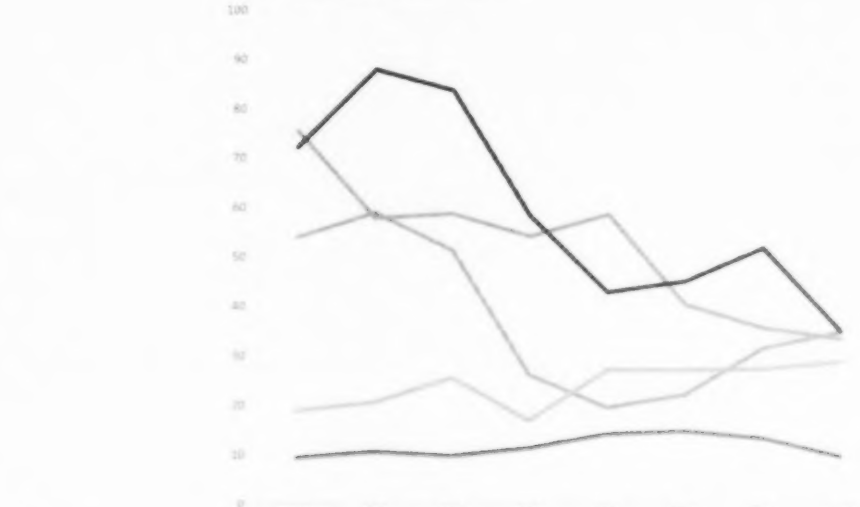
Figure 1. Expenditures for support to strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutions, 2008–2015 (in millions of dollars)



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Africa	5.05	9.94	5.62	5.13	5.30	3.99	4.55	3.44
Arab States	2.55	1.49	3.61	3.80	3.59	5.15	2.48	4.30
Asia and the Pacific	7.92	8.41	9.78	9.06	5.13	3.92	4.23	5.17
Europe and the CIS	14.23	13.33	12.96	13.90	14.30	14.29	3.95	3.48
Latin America and the Caribbean	26.94	25.09	27.19	27.74	24.40	15.81	22.37	14.05

Source: UNDP finance system (Atlas) and Independent Evaluation Office analysis

Figure 2. Expenditures for addressing drivers of corruption projects at the country-level, 2008-2015 (in millions of dollars)



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Africa	75.47	57.87	58.79	54.27	58.76	40.51	35.89	33.73
Arab States	9.43	10.61	9.83	11.48	14.30	14.95	13.60	9.96
Asia and the Pacific	54.00	58.99	51.32	26.20	19.70	22.36	31	35.09
Europe and the CIS	18.93	20.68	25.65	16.99	27.32	27.29	27.6	29.08
Latin America and the Caribbean	72.12	87.99	83.75	58.38	42.92	45.17	51.93	35.29

Source: UNDP Finance System (Atlas) and Independent Evaluation Office analysis

Finding 2. UNDP has taken a pragmatic approach towards facilitating its anti-corruption agenda. Specific anti-corruption initiatives were supported in addition to initiatives to strengthen accountability and transparency measures, particularly demand-side accountability.

17. UNDP took a two-pronged approach to anti-corruption. While anti-corruption is acknowledged as a separate programme theme in both its strategic plans, UNDP programme strategies also emphasized that accountability and transparency in national and subnational public institutions are critical in improving governance and reducing corruption. UNDP has explicitly acknowledged in its programmes that reducing corruption is key to achieving development results, both in the Millennium Development Goals acceleration initiatives and in subsequent sectoral efforts. In the countries included in this assessment, external as well as internal factors maintained the pressure for anti-corruption reform processes. As the country case studies show, more concerted efforts were evident when anti-corruption was government-driven and had political ownership. Table 1, below, shows UNDP engagement in addressing drivers of corruption and strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutions.

Table 1: Extent of UNDP engagement in addressing drivers of corruption and strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutions (of the 65 country programmes evaluated)

Support to addressing drivers of corruption	No. of countries with initiatives	Support to strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutions	No. of countries with initiatives
Access (right) to information policies and mechanisms	34	Anti-corruption policies	36
Oversight mechanisms	31	Anti-corruption agencies	23
Public finance management transparency	26	Anti-corruption advocacy and awareness / Support to civil society	35
Public administration and civil service	38	United Nations Convention against Corruption review/implementation	17
E-governance	18	Anti-corruption data management	23
Local-level accountability and transparency mechanisms	39	Anti-corruption surveys	21
Support to justice and judiciary reforms	25	Sectoral anti-corruption risk assessments	15

Note: The total number of countries indicated in each area is based on the 65 country programmes included in this evaluations analysis.

Finding 3. Leveraging synergies across governance projects and other programme areas would have provided UNDP more entry points to support its country-level anti-corruption and accountability agenda.

18. Although individual projects align with national priorities, the overall governance programme remains fragmented in most cases. UNDP did not use some of its support in the poverty reduction, environment or health sectors to integrate anti-corruption issues. There were instances where country offices made specific efforts to explore synergies, and in such instances the overall contribution of UNDP to anti-corruption was enhanced.

19. The UNDP governance strategy mentions a number of areas that UNDP will be working in (or intends to work in), but does not distinguish how it would pursue them at the global, regional and country levels. UNDP has developed broad governance strategies that outline several governance areas for the organization to prioritize. Although UNDP considers strategic plans sufficient for institutional-level programme prioritization, in 2015, UNDP developed its internal strategy, *Building Inclusive Societies and Sustaining Peace through Democratic Governance and Conflict Prevention*. Anti-corruption is identified as a cross-cutting strategic priority. However, accountability areas pertaining to public administration are not adequately prioritized, or lack clarity. The strategy does not emphasize governance work in development contexts (countries not affected by crisis), and does not distinguish between the different governance contexts to which UNDP responds.

B. Strengthening national anti-corruption capacities

Finding 4. The UNDP contribution was more evident in strengthening anti-corruption institutional capacities and policies, and to a lesser extent in enabling anti-corruption outcomes.

20. Sixty country programmes have implemented 200 projects that support anti-corruption enforcement policies and institutions. Since 2006, the programmatic thrust that UNDP has given to this area through global projects has contributed to the increase in the number of country programmes supporting anti-corruption programmes.

Enabling policies and institutional capacities

21. UNDP support to anti-corruption policies and practices in many instances informed and shaped government programmes and priorities in setting up institutional anti-corruption measures. There were improvements in the anti-corruption policies of countries supported by UNDP. Across the countries assessed, UNDP programmes strengthened anti-corruption legislation, policies, institutions or monitoring systems by formulating anti-corruption enforcement and related policies (such as anti-corruption policies, assets declaration and whistle-blower protection), or strengthening capacities of audit and investigatory agencies and institutions, assessing risk, managing corruption information, and conducting perception and integrity surveys. The establishment of information platforms in a number of countries enabled anti-corruption agencies to increase their outreach and public engagement.

22. In several countries, UNDP had the distinction of being one of the first organizations to support governments in strengthening governance and building national institutions and capacities. UNDP was responsive to evolving national governance issues in complex contexts. Development actors in the country case studies acknowledged this, and it was also strongly evident in the meta-synthesis of evaluations carried out for this evaluation.

23. The country and desk studies carried out for this evaluation show that while anti-corruption legislation and institutions are important, they are not by themselves sufficient to control corruption unless there are also measures in place to ensure government accountability, and robust judicial and prosecution systems. What has been lacking are the necessary links connecting anti-corruption efforts to governance and public sector management reform in areas such as public procurement, financial management, and judiciary and prosecution services, as well as public reporting and access to information. While inadequate institutional reform has often hindered government accountability measures and their effectiveness, it is nevertheless evident that UNDP has made important contributions to the anti-corruption processes of partner countries. It should also be noted that, beyond a certain point, governments were ambivalent about international support to anti-corruption and accountability and transparency initiatives.

24. When support was provided to anti-corruption enforcement agencies in isolation, the outcomes were limited. Effective functioning of one anti-corruption agency depended on collaboration and cooperation with other enforcement agencies and institutions. Anti-corruption enforcement agencies, such as anti-corruption commissions, tend to suffer from a lack of infrastructure and financial and human resources, limiting their ability to sustain activities and results. The capacity of the newly formed anti-corruption commissions to command the cooperation of long-standing, resource-rich and powerful agencies and ministries remains a challenge. Several national agencies carried out functions related to anti-corruption (audit, economic and financial crimes units, income-tax agencies, ombudsmen and other oversight bodies).

25. While UNDP initiatives were pertinent to the governance requirements of countries and achieved their stated objectives of contributing to improving the policies and

capacities of government institutions, in a number of cases the duration of programmes minimized their effectiveness. Further, there were countries where the capacities built were insufficient for institutions to function on their own after UNDP support ended.

Support to corruption data and information management

26. An issue in most countries is the lack of time-series data and measurement practices that are comparable over a period of time to monitor progress on actions taken and progress made in corruption control. In several countries UNDP supported surveys, corruption data management, and risk diagnostics. A limitation of UNDP support to anti-corruption risk assessments is that they were one-off efforts, often reducing their potential as a policy tool. Studies and surveys that were not linked to policy processes were often limited in their use and had poor visibility.

27. Most of the available corruption data are perception-based rather than based on diagnostics of the functioning of institutions and sectors. Although UNDP supported surveys, broader challenges pertaining to corruption measurement were not addressed.

28. UNDP supported corruption data portals in several countries in order to provide easy channels for citizens to report corruption and for authorities to track their responses to complaints received. Corruption data portals generated citizens' interest and, in most countries, led to spikes in the reporting of corruption and other unethical practices. The success of the data portals depended on the follow-up on reported cases, which could not be ensured in most instances where UNDP support was provided. The more successful platforms ensured follow-up by collecting information pertaining to the reported cases and sharing it with the respective government departments for action. In most other instances, however, the anti-corruption agency did not have adequate resources to carry out preliminary investigations of corruption cases. There were often no systems in place to deal with the reported cases, leading to frustration among citizens and anti-corruption activists.

Facilitating implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

29. UNDP complemented the normative role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the United Nations Convention against Corruption, facilitating initiatives to further its implementation. UNDP support to the Convention is closely aligned with its governance work and complements the UNODC normative mandate on the Convention through its support to public administration policies, capacity development and anti-corruption institutions, and engagement with state and non-state actors. UNDP positioning in relation to implementation is also related to its representation in most countries, its ongoing partnerships with government institutions, and its knowledge of practical opportunities on the ground.

Supporting anti-corruption advocacy

30. UNDP has supported the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in creating demand for accountable, transparent governance and awareness about corruption. In 35 of the 65 countries assessed, UNDP supported awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives of civil society organizations and facilitated government strategies to engage with them. It is noteworthy that UNDP supported such organizations even in countries where the political space for civil society engagement was limited.

31. Country studies illustrate the constraints of civil society organizations in pursuing an anti-corruption agenda. Improved technology and media have increased the communication of perceptions and demand for government effectiveness, particularly in the delivery of public services and transparency in the use of public funds. Unless civil society organizations were working on probing corruption cases or facilitating citizens'

platforms for reporting cases or activities that attracted media attention, it was hard for them to sustain the interest of citizens and other constituencies.

32. Capacities of civil society organizations working at the subnational level are often weak. As with many international development organizations, UNDP engagement was largely confined to civil society organizations based in capital cities.

C. Addressing the drivers of corruption: support to strengthening accountability and transparency

Finding 5. The extent to which accountability and transparency initiatives contributed to anti-corruption efforts of the countries varied across initiatives. An explicit anti-corruption focus in accountability and transparency initiatives would have enhanced UNDP contributions.

33. UNDP anti-corruption work was underpinned by, and was part of, a wider governance programme in which support to enhancing accountability in public administration and local governance was seen as critical to addressing a variety of corruption drivers. UNDP acknowledged the importance of supporting multisectoral accountability mechanisms – supporting oversight mechanisms, public administration reforms, public sector ethics, civil service reforms, decentralized governance and e-governance. Rule of law programmes were implemented in number of countries, complementing anti-corruption efforts. Although anti-corruption was not always central to accountability and transparency project objectives, UNDP support to such initiatives contributed to anti-corruption processes in public management.

34. Measures to enhance accountability and transparency constituted a primary focus of support in a large majority of countries where UNDP provided governance support. Such support was spread across UNDP public administration, local governance and rule-of-law programmes in 124 country programmes and 729 projects in varied development contexts.

35. UNDP support enabled setting up systems, strengthening institutional capacities and providing viable models for enhancing local-level accountability and transparency. UNDP programmes were responsive to the needs of governments and national governance priorities. The change processes to which UNDP contributed varied considerably across countries. UNDP contributions in a range of accountability and transparency areas had the potential to inform and influence public policy processes and practices to increase government accountability. The contributions were not, however, sufficient to ensure transparent governance or public management accountability in all cases. Political impetus and government commitment to governance and institutional reforms, and the limited scope of UNDP interventions, undermined the achievement of accountability and transparency outcomes that would strengthen anti-corruption.

36. A strong area of UNDP support was to local-level transparency and accountability measures embedded within themes such as participatory local development and governance. Although anti-corruption was not explicitly cited as a key objective, it underpinned various initiatives to reduce institutional inefficiencies in public management. UNDP supported access to information, citizen participation and consultation, and citizens' monitoring and oversight as important measures to strengthen local-level governance and service delivery. About 60 per cent of UNDP country programmes supported local-level anti-corruption and transparency and accountability activities. Over time, this developed into key streams of support, with instances of governments and other agencies replicating the UNDP-promoted local development tools. Sector-specific governance integrity measures were largely supported at the local level.

37. UNDP created its own space in accountability and transparency support, barring some areas such as the management of petroleum funds. As noted in many government and donor interviews, one comparative advantage of UNDP is the cross-country experience it brings and its ability to work with governments even in politically difficult situations. It was also evident that its flexibility to support smaller components of the public administration spectrum helped UNDP position itself well within the accountability and transparency support area. This provided the leveraging power to engage in broader governance reforms.

Improving access to information

38. UNDP contributions were important in improving local-level access to public information, particularly initiatives that facilitated citizens' utilization of information to engage in local planning and governance. Improvements in access to information have succeeded in increasing accountability and, to a certain extent, reducing local-level corruption. UNDP supported initiatives that strengthened access to information in 34 of the 65 countries assessed, some of which entailed more substantive support. Key activities included supporting access to information policies at the national and local levels; developing information and communication technologies for information-sharing; integrating national databases through communication technologies, information portals and e-governance; and awareness-raising and advocacy. Given the importance of citizens' access to information and the prior dearth of information access initiatives, UNDP support helped governments become more responsive to the demand for transparency in public functioning.

39. In several instances, UNDP initiatives were scaled up by governments, were critical to informing government policies have enhanced implementation of national legislations, and yielded incremental outcomes by contributing to transparent budget processes at the local level. UNDP promoted the use of information and communication technology in anti-corruption initiatives. Text message-based corruption alerts to the anti-corruption authorities, for example, generated considerable public enthusiasm, although challenges in follow-up of the complaints remain.

40. There was considerable variation in UNDP outcomes for information and communication technology across the areas where they were used, expanding access to information and improving public services in over a quarter of the countries assessed. The sustainability of the information portals was modest in many countries where it was not properly integrated into the functioning of government institutions or local governments. The same must be said about the use of information and communication technologies for streamlining government staff information. In most regions, there was an additional challenge in terms of providing Internet access and confidentiality, and covering costs relating to the implementation of technological solutions.

41. Efforts to modernize public administration in key government institutions increased government effectiveness. National and local level e-governance is one example: in 18 countries assessed, UNDP supported and made tangible improvements in areas that used e-governance. When used in the service sector, it reduced the number of middlemen and corruption opportunities in service provision. UNDP supported the computerization of integrated financial and payroll management systems and the development and implementation of policies and procedures for human resource management.

Enhancing the role of citizens

42. UNDP contributed to expanding the role of citizens and community-based organizations in local development planning. Local participatory mechanisms were supported in several countries with a fair degree of success in raising citizen demand for accountability in public services. The local development space has many actors, and

there are countries where UNDP has sizeable programmes. UNDP support has contributed to providing viable models for citizen participation in enhancing local accountability and transparency and sector governance.

43. There were several examples showing UNDP engagement with civil society organizations and local communities. The country studies show that the link between decentralization and accountability is not straightforward, and that outcomes are largely influenced by country specificities and the reform approach. Local governance may be particularly successful where there is local capacity and high levels of participation. Local governance strategies were most successful when combined with high levels of community participation, and when pre-implementation included building the capacities of local government staff and infrastructure.

44. The success of local participatory measures depended above all on whether accountability systems were in place at the local and other levels, and whether local-level initiatives were linked to broader policy processes. In the absence of such linkages, local-level efforts had incremental outcomes and remained one-off or isolated initiatives with limited impact on accountability and transparency policies and practices. Considering the short duration and scope of the initiatives, there were challenges in ensuring replicability and influencing government policies and practices. Often, there were similar initiatives by different agencies working at the local level. Adequately leveraging government policies or institutionalizing the pilot initiatives was critical for broader application by governments and development agencies.

45. Linkages between local initiatives and national-level policies were weak – an issue that was not a problem solely for UNDP – and often serious measures to establish such linkages were lacking. The immediate challenge in a number of countries where the initiatives were fairly successful was institutionalizing them in local government systems. Where UNDP also supported developing local governance processes, the opportunities for taking demand-side accountability measures forward were relatively better.

Sector integrity initiatives

46. The Millennium Development Goals acceleration framework provided the momentum to initiate efforts to reduce governance risks in key development areas. That momentum was not sustained to address corruption issues in the social sector, which continued to be an underrepresented area of UNDP support.

47. UNDP prioritized the education, health, water and environment sectors, and programme areas such as crisis and the extractive industries, for comprehensive sectoral integrity assessments, which identified governance vulnerabilities. There were positive examples where UNDP support was central to improving local-level sector initiatives. One of the limitations of the UNDP sector governance integrity assessments was the lack of periodicity. When sector assessments were carried out, their use was not sufficiently promoted.

48. Although there is growing interest in governance risk assessments, sectoral risk management has not progressed sufficiently. Country studies show that social sectors have conducted few risk assessments pertaining to corruption and procurement practices. A majority of United Nations common country assessments identified governance issues and corruption as impediments to poverty reduction and service delivery; this was corroborated by the country studies carried out for this evaluation. Institutional capacity weaknesses were among the most commonly mentioned constraints, although their underlying causes were not adequately diagnosed. The tools to assess fiduciary risks in public finance management and financial accountability were not sufficient for sector

risk assessments. Opportunities were lost in addressing corruption issues in the sectors where UNDP had sizeable initiatives.

49. In many countries, UNDP provided procurement and fiduciary services to the government in the social and infrastructure sectors. Although UNDP is moving away from procurement-related support, many countries consider UNDP services to be efficient and cost effective. As such, they are sought out in some countries where governments are shrinking corruption in key social sectors. While such support had a 'trickle-down' effect in enhancing accountability and transparency and improved services, it proved challenging in terms of enabling more systemic improvements to institutional processes and practices.

Gender-governance linkages

50. UNDP issued publications highlighting the disproportionate impact of corruption on women, but there was little evidence that gender perspectives were analysed or linked to anti-corruption and governance programme support. Commitment to gender equality expressed in the country programme documents was not translated into gender-sensitive indicators, baselines or targets that would have enabled UNDP to measure progress in addressing gender equality through its governance programme. With some exceptions, UNDP anti-corruption and public administration programmes lacked a gender analysis that would inform programme strategies. UNDP produced guidance documents on integrating gender dimension into public administration that were considered useful for wider dissemination. However, country offices lacked the capacity to integrate a gender perspectives into public administration reform and anti-corruption programming.

D. Facilitating global and regional policy debates and advocacy

Finding 6. UNDP proactively engaged in global anti-corruption debates and advocacy. UNDP actively participated in the sustainable development goals debates and contributed to the goal 16 agenda.

51. UNDP, in partnership with other international actors, facilitated global-level discussions on anti-corruption strategies. UNDP is part of joint initiatives such as Tax Inspectors without Borders, the International Aid Transparency Initiative and the Open Government Partnership. The contributions of global projects to the promotion of anti-corruption debates have been important during the two strategic plan periods. Global anti-corruption projects facilitated UNDP engagement and provided a channel linking country-level work with global debates. UNDP engaged in various conferences, produced knowledge products, and brought country perspectives to the global discussion. The projects led to UNDP representation in various global forums and enabled it to build global partnerships to contribute to anti-corruption policy and advocacy.

52. Through communities of practice, UNDP provided global platforms to debate anti-corruption challenges and collaborate on finding solutions. Annually, the global community of practice on anti-corruption hosts a debate on ways forward to strengthen the anti-corruption agenda. These well-attended debates facilitate the exchange of lessons and practices from various countries between governments, civil society actors and donors. Decisions in these forums upon which there was wide consensus are often pursued for concerted action.

Finding 7. UNDP regional programmes made important contributions by linking regional actors with global networks and by facilitating cooperation with international organizations.

53. UNDP regional engagement spanned a range of governance areas and provided support to regional instruments and institutions, knowledge-sharing events, and training. At the regional level, UNDP brought to the fore anti-corruption issues, including issues

pertaining to areas such as freedom of information (or the right to information), which were not sufficiently addressed in country-level debates. Starting some of those discussions from a regional rather than a country-level perspective helped propel the policy dialogue – for example, in Asia and the Pacific – as it meant that no country was singled out. Another example is the role of UNDP in facilitating the establishment of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network, the first inclusive Arab-owned regional anti-corruption platform for knowledge networking, capacity development and policy dialogue.

54. UNDP prioritized partnerships with regional intergovernmental bodies, providing a more structured approach to regional engagement in the Africa region. The Regional Programme for Africa has had a clear regional orientation focused on strengthening the capacities of regional intergovernmental institutions, building regional normative frameworks, and fostering knowledge management. Anti-corruption is explicitly considered in the context of support to strengthening regulatory frameworks and transparency in relation to natural resource extraction and financial flows. The African Union Anti-corruption Board used UNDP technical expertise in hosting the first continental meeting on extractive industries, illicit financial flows, repatriation of stolen assets, and regional enforcement of the African Union Anti-corruption Convention.

V. Conclusions

55. UNDP made important contributions to anti-corruption in a number of areas. The conclusions focus on contextual issues and UNDP contributions to national capacity development in advancing anti-corruption.

Conclusion 1. UNDP anti-corruption programme support is carried out in a complex policy and implementation context with multiple public administration challenges. Many countries where UNDP provides support continue to face significant systemic challenges in their efforts to improve accountability and reduce corruption.

56. Partner governments acknowledged the detrimental effects of corruption on development and recognized the need to strengthen governance systems and processes. In each of the countries included in this evaluation, measures have been established to formulate anti-corruption policies, set up institutions, address accountability and transparency issues, and launch capacity development initiatives. Despite those efforts, many partner countries have not prioritized and entrenched these actions sufficiently to root out corruption. The evaluation found considerable inconsistency and often insufficient government commitment to the accountability and anti-corruption enforcement processes and institutions that had been established. While governance reforms were ongoing in each of the countries included in this evaluation, their focus was usually on economic growth. Preference for certain areas of governance reforms means that UNDP has to be realistic about the expected outcomes from its anti-corruption support efforts.

57. UNDP support to strengthening anti-corruption and measures that enhance accountable, transparent governance continues to be relevant in most partner countries. Yet given the sensitive nature of the subject, UNDP and international development organizations in general typically face government resistance to comprehensive anti-corruption measures. UNDP programmes have therefore tended to address the drivers of corruption as part of broader public administration support, and provided more direct anti-corruption support where governments had established their own national anti-corruption programmes and were open to technical advice. The UNDP emphasis on addressing drivers of corruption is well considered, although uptake of these initiatives has been quite limited and has had marginal influence on corruption-related dimensions

of governance reform processes. As has been the case with many organizations working in this area, although UNDP addressed public administration drivers, the thrust given to accountability and transparency was insufficient to generate the critical mass needed for the transformational changes necessary to significantly reduce corruption.

58. There was less resistance to initiatives aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency or addressing corruption at the local as compared to the national level. Governments have shown interest in UNDP engagement at subnational levels, especially to help link accountability and transparency in governance to service delivery.

Conclusion 2. Anti-corruption and accountable governance were key areas of UNDP support during the current and previous strategic plans. Although the resources spent were not comparable to those spent by some of the international financial institutions, UNDP has developed a unique niche in supporting efforts to address corruption drivers and strengthen national anti-corruption capacities.

59. A significant aspect of UNDP work in this area has been its willingness to take on sensitive topics such as anti-corruption. In several countries, UNDP was one of the first organizations to support anti-corruption initiatives. It is clear that long-term UNDP support has led to incremental reductions in corruption risk and has improved accountability and transparency.

60. Simultaneously pursuing anti-corruption and accountability initiatives enables UNDP to work at multiple levels. UNDP supported anti-corruption initiatives in 65 countries and efforts to address the drivers of corruption in public administration in 124 countries. Irrespective of the objectives of individual projects, these areas of work are complementary, enhancing the overall UNDP contribution to anti-corruption. Support to anti-corruption policies and institutions across partner countries, as well as initiatives that address the drivers of corruption, were broadly defined and did not entail a predisposition towards a particular approach. This has increased UNDP flexibility in responding to national government priorities.

61. While UNDP contributions have been important in enhancing anti-corruption policies and capacities, their effectiveness and sustainability are dependent on broader governance capacities. As with many organizations working in this area, while public administration drivers were addressed by UNDP, the thrust given to accountability and transparency issues was insufficient to generate the critical mass needed for transformations in overall governance for reducing corruption. While UNDP contributions have been important in enhancing anti-corruption policies and capacities, their effectiveness was dependent on larger governance capacities, which had often not reached an adequate level. This was a reflection of a wider challenge in the policy space: a limitation in linking public administration reforms to anti-corruption measures.

62. Although regional variations were reflected in UNDP programme priorities, anti-corruption programmes were underrepresented in regions such as Africa and the Asia and the Pacific region. There was considerable latitude for UNDP country offices to tailor their programmes on anti-corruption and to address the drivers of corruption while taking national context into account.

63. UNDP country offices are primarily responsible for mobilizing resources for these programmes. This builds considerable variation in the scale and scope of programming, as it is driven by country-level funding decisions by donors and partner governments. The lack of an institutional anti-corruption strategy contributed to the ad hoc nature of UNDP anti-corruption programming and the regional variability in UNDP engagement on this issue. In regions such as Africa, the scope and scale of programmes, while ahead of UNDP country programmes in other regions, were not commensurate with the demand for anti-corruption programme support.

64. Partnerships with civil society organizations in advocacy and awareness-raising complemented UNDP programme goals. UNDP took a balanced approach in its support to civil society organizations and citizens' forums, including in countries with vibrant civil society-led advocacy efforts demanding accountability and action to reduce corruption. This work with civil society has been especially noteworthy in countries with limited space for civil society engagement. UNDP supported regional platforms for civil society actors to engage with state actors and other anti-corruption stakeholders. Strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations at the local level received only limited attention.

Conclusion 3. Contributions to global and regional debates and advocacy have been important, particularly to secure attention to anti-corruption targets in sustainable development goal 16.

65. UNDP facilitated the efforts of programme countries to engage on issues of anti-corruption and accountability within the establishment of the sustainable development goals. The global anti-corruption community that UNDP supported includes a range of anti-corruption actors such as governments, civil society organizations, think tanks and donors that have exchanged information on practices and have debated ways to address anti-corruption issues. UNDP leads the UNDP-UNODC International Anti-corruption Campaign, which serves as a flagship advocacy mechanism, providing avenues to influence global discourse on anti-corruption. UNDP global projects and regional programmes made important contributions by linking regional actors with global networks and facilitating cooperation with international organizations. The global anti-corruption projects facilitated UNDP engagement at the global level and provided a channel linking country-level work with global debates. The regional programmes, particularly in the Africa and Arab States regions, contributed to facilitating regional instruments and anti-corruption forums.

Conclusion 4. UNDP has contributed to strengthening national anti-corruption capacities.

66. UNDP has been persistent in its support to ensure that policies and institutions are sufficiently robust and help to motivate further reforms. Especially noteworthy has been the work of UNDP to help usher in anti-corruption and accountability efforts in countries with a challenging political environment.

67. UNDP demonstrated that it is well positioned to support countries in implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and enabled countries to fulfil their basic requirements for Convention compliance. The global reach of UNDP, its ongoing close partnerships with government institutions, and its knowledge of practical on-the-ground opportunities are useful attributes. UNDP contributions to implementation of the Convention are notable, particularly in establishing linkages between the enforcement and accountability and transparency dimensions of the convention.

68. Anti-corruption programme success is greatly enhanced by having well-structured governance systems, an independent and apolitical judiciary, and anti-corruption institutions with unfettered powers to investigate illegal activity. Conventional mechanisms, such as anti-corruption commissions and legislative reviews, often fail to reduce corruption unless there is adequate thrust to strengthen the governance drivers of corruption. UNDP contributions have, therefore, been important as inputs to the processes of strengthening institutional capacities. This is where UNDP impacts have been felt, rather than in actual corruption reduction measures and actions, which are the purview of national governments.

Conclusion 5. UNDP has contributed to anti-corruption and increased accountability at local levels. Tangible outcomes were observed where UNDP

addressed anti-corruption and accountability through local development and local governance initiatives. While the sustainability of some local outcomes remains in question, UNDP support has clearly contributed to increased demand for transparent and accountable local development and service delivery.

69. UNDP programming at the local level typically focused on the demand side of accountability in governance. Attempts were made to bridge the interests of supply- and demand-side actors to strengthen local-level accountability and transparency. UNDP worked on several themes – such as participatory local development, participatory local governance and e-governance – which developed into key streams of support over time. There were several examples of UNDP-led initiatives at the local level that were replicated by governments and other development organizations. UNDP support to citizen participation in local development had positive effects on local-level service delivery. Access to information, citizen participation and consultation, citizen monitoring and oversight, and social accountability initiatives, were supported to strengthen local governance and service delivery. A critical mass of demand was generated at the local level through demonstration projects, which in many cases had the potential for spiralling up and helping to reform national-level policies and practices.

Conclusion 6. Accountability initiatives were more effective when a sectoral approach was taken. UNDP is in an advantageous position to support governments in reducing corruption and increasing accountability and transparency, and has demonstrated that it can provide useful tools and techniques. Yet UNDP has not taken full advantage of its opportunities to better integrate this work into its other development programming.

70. With governance and public administration-related programmes in over 130 countries, the partnership capital that UNDP has generated over the years is significant: it gives UNDP the leveraging power of its governance portfolio and other development sectors to anchor anti-corruption work in broader governance processes and promote linkages with sectoral development. While there were efforts to address larger governance and development linkages, such efforts were not systematically pursued or prioritized. The UNDP sectoral governance focus has not progressed adequately. As a result, opportunities to integrate accountability and anti-corruption measures into the work of UNDP in its livelihoods, sustainable development, governance and resilience programming have been missed.

71. UNDP has managed its anti-corruption and accountability work apart from its other government support, particularly poverty reduction and Global Fund programmes. This represents lost opportunities to address corruption risks in these areas. The Millennium Development Goals acceleration framework, in a departure from this general trend, generated positive momentum through sector risk assessments. UNDP has yet to take this approach further.

Conclusion 7. While UNDP has supported governance risk assessments, it has not made these assessments a core aspect of its anti-corruption and accountability programming. In cases where assessments have been carried out, a lack of periodicity limited their utility as a tool for governments to track progress.

72. UNDP identified a range of development areas where it recommended that risk assessments should be carried out. UNDP-supported risk assessments consisted mainly of one-off activities that fell short of being context-specific assessments that could consistently inform sectoral policies. The assessments carried out were not embedded within overall sector policies. UNDP did not utilize corruption risk mapping when establishing poverty, health, governance or environmental programming, and did not push for government partners to undertake such mapping. This is a missed opportunity, since in a majority of countries context-specific corruption risk assessments are often non-existent.

Conclusion 8. Over the years, UNDP has developed a strong presence in the area of anti-corruption and public administration-related accountability and transparency support. UNDP has yet to use the reorganization of institutional portfolios to strengthen its anti-corruption programme capacities in order to respond to the demand for anti-corruption support. The under-emphasis of public administration support at the institutional level has implications for anti-corruption programme support to countries in a development context.

73. Lack of alignment between institutional-level programme prioritization and country-level programme demand is contributing to the decline of core public administration anti-corruption and accountability and transparency work. This affects the anti-corruption and accountability work of UNDP. The core public administration work in countries in a development context – an area in which UNDP has significantly invested for two decades and developed a strong niche – did not receive adequate institutional attention. Consolidation of governance programmes, earlier classified under crisis and development programming, has yet to include public administration work.

74. UNDP has a significant role to play in low- and middle-income countries in facilitating implementation of anti-corruption and accountability and transparency measures. The present institutional governance prioritization does not facilitate the UNDP role in countries in development contexts.

VI. Recommendations

75. The recommendations provided here can enhance the support that UNDP provides to partner countries through its programming. While cognizant of the reduction in UNDP regular resources and the consequent challenges to programming, the recommendations provided are not necessarily restricted by this situation. While the recommendations focus on the work of UNDP and external donors, the evaluation recognizes the pre-eminent role of national governments to take responsibility for reducing corruption and improving accountability.

Recommendation 1. Prioritize support to addressing corruption risks to development. Develop an anti-corruption programme strategy that more explicitly links the UNDP anti-corruption approach to other development programming.

76. The sustainable development goals present opportunities for UNDP to reaffirm the value and significance of UNDP commitments to anti-corruption and accountable governance. To enhance UNDP contributions to addressing development–corruption linkages, UNDP should develop an anti-corruption strategy that explicitly links these efforts to UNDP governance and development programmes and its support to countries in attaining the sustainable development goals.

77. UNDP should strategically address corruption risks to development in its country programming. UNDP support to the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption has been important in terms of enabling basic national frameworks. It is time to move beyond basic compliance initiatives towards more concrete anti-corruption measures, including enforcement measures and those that address specific drivers of corruption.

78. Taking forward the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework initiative, UNDP should develop a sectoral focus to its anti-corruption support. UNDP should identify key thematic areas where it will make development and corruption linkages more explicit, and should highlight its willingness to support governments in their efforts to address corruption in service delivery. Greater efforts should be made to use development programme areas as entry points to further promote sectoral anti-

corruption and accountability measures; such efforts should be initiated in the current programme.

79. There is a need for concerted anti-corruption initiatives in key development sectors, which require partnerships, for instance, in the provision of health, education, water and sanitation. Within the ambit of sustainable development goals processes, UNDP should develop global partnerships in sector-specific anti-corruption initiatives.

80. All anti-corruption support efforts at the global, regional and country levels should address gender-related aspects, as this continues to be a weak area of UNDP support.

Recommendation 2. Address regional variations in anti-corruption support and prioritize support to regions that are underrepresented.

81. Anti-corruption programme support is relevant across all regions, yet anti-corruption and accountability-related support are not adequately pursued in all regions. UNDP should review the global scope of its anti-corruption and accountability support and place increased emphasis on regions that have been underrepresented in this work. Considering the scale of the anti-corruption and accountability and transparency challenges facing many countries, UNDP support for improved access to information and modernized public administration systems and to sectoral anti-corruption efforts remains critical.

Recommendation 3. Consider prioritizing support to anti-corruption and governance risk assessments and measurements.

82. UNDP should accelerate its efforts to support the measurement of anti-corruption progress as part of the sustainable development goal 16 monitoring initiative. It should support sector-specific anti-corruption initiatives to diagnose governance and institutional risk and capacity issues. Robust tools for measuring and analysing governance risk are critical in setting priorities, understanding what works, raising awareness, and furthering reforms. In sectors where there is overlapping support from multiple organizations, UNDP should initiate partnerships to carry out joint periodic sector integrity assessments.

83. UNDP should revisit its anti-corruption and accountability-related data gathering tools and techniques. UNDP should be more strategic in supporting anti-corruption and transparency-related advocacy and awareness-raising data generation. Rather than perception surveys, UNDP should facilitate developing and using practical and applicable corruption risk assessment and monitoring tools.

Recommendation 4. Increase support for local-level initiatives to strengthen demand-side accountability, particularly concerning access to information and social accountability initiatives.

84. Transparent, and accountable service delivery at the local level continues to pose challenges. UNDP made a significant contribution to advancing national- and local-level demand-side accountability through its support to access to information and citizen participation mechanisms in local development. In moving forward, UNDP should focus on providing viable models to enhance accountability at the local level, foster improved local public administration processes and better service delivery, and increase the scope of its local-level anti-corruption initiatives.

Recommendation 5. Further strengthen global and regional anti-corruption projects to support country programmes and enable UNDP to contribute to regional and global policy debates and advocacy. Global and regional projects should be used to develop key streams of programme support at the country level.

85. Global and regional anti-corruption projects have added value beyond what UNDP accomplishes through its country programmes. UNDP should consider allocating

additional resources to global and regional anti-corruption projects. While it is important to support country offices in national institutional capacity development, consider using global and regional projects to promote new approaches and sectoral anti-corruption initiatives. Global and regional projects should be leveraged meet the programming needs of middle-income countries.

Recommendation 6. Enhance fund mobilization for anti-corruption support, championing select areas of anti-corruption and accountability initiatives.

86. As a way to open more funding avenues, ensure that the UNDP fund mobilization approach takes into account opportunities to link anti-corruption and accountability and transparency to social services and development sectors.

Recommendation 7. Strengthen staff capacities at the global and regional levels to address the need for specialized policy and technical services for anti-corruption programming.

87. A structural review of UNDP has consolidated institutional arrangements and streamlined staff positions at headquarters and regional hubs. Given UNDP commitments to sustainable development goal 16 and the global anti-corruption agenda, it is critical that UNDP have adequate staff capacities at the global and regional levels. Staff capacities at the regional hubs are critical to supporting smaller country offices. Consider increasing staff with anti-corruption expertise at headquarters and regional hubs.